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Terms for Bible Wines in Chinese.

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THIS subject is not altogether new in the pages of the *Recorder*. Among the "Correspondence" in the number for June, 1885, a writer, "S. B. P.," dissatisfied with the term 酒 *tsiu*, signifying alcoholic liquor, in common use, there being no specific word for "wine" in the Chinese language, suggested 葡萄汁 *p'u-t'ao-ch'ih*, the juice of the grape, to use for wine in the Chinese Scriptures. In the August number following, there were published two replies not favoring the proposition and the discussion was dropped.

But this subject is important and demands attention, not only as a question respecting the correct translation of the inspired Word of God, but also as affecting the teachings of that Word on the subject of temperance, in the modern use of the term as referring to the use or non-use of alcoholic drinks. It is evident that if the Bible sanctions the use of alcoholic and hence intoxicating wines, the doctrine of total abstinence from such beverages cannot stand, as it is not in harmony with Christian truth, which is and ever must be the basis of all true reforms.

And that it is not necessarily presumptuous to question the correctness of some of the present renderings of Hebrew and Greek terms, usually translated wine, is manifest. Chinese Christians naturally understand the Bible, as at present translated, as upholding the use of alcoholic beverages. But chemical science, physiological laws, and human history and experience, all condemn the use of such drinks, so far as they are alcoholic, as needless or positively injurious. We know, therefore, that the present translation of some of the terms for wine must be incorrect. Truth is always self-consistent, and as God is the author of nature as well as of the Bible, his written revelation, when rightly understood, will always be in harmony with the correct teachings of science and human history.

In the present article it is proposed to suggest modified renderings of only four of the various terms translated wine in the Scriptures. These are the Hebrew terms *tiros*, *yayin* and *shakar*, and the Greek term *oinos*.

Tiros occurs thirty-eight times in the Old Testament. In the English Authorized Version, twenty-six times it is translated "wine," eleven times "new-wine," and once "sweet-wine." Taking the Delegates' Version as an illustration for all the Chinese translations, thirty-one times it is translated by the ordinary character

tsin, alcoholic liquor, twice it has the same with a word signifying good, excellent, qualifying it, and five times it is rendered by expressions signifying a spirituous or some fermentable liquor newly made.

As to the proper meaning of *tirosk*, Dr. Moore, the writer of the Article "Wine, Bible," in *Schaff's Hertzog*, calls *tirosk* a "common term for must," or unfermented juice of the grape. He also claims that this is "the meaning with which *tirosk* has come down to us." On the other hand, Dr. Lees, in the *Temperance Bible Commentary*, says: "*Tirosk* is not wine at all, but the 'fruit of the vineyard' in its natural state." Also Principal Douglas, in Fairbairn's *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, Article "Wine and Strong Drink," says: "The most general term among those applied to the produce of the vine is *tirosk*, which we translated 'vintage-fruit.'"

And the last writer also supports his position by several strong arguments: "(1) . . . It is habitually combined with *dōgan* and *yitzhar*, translated 'corn and oil' in the Authorized Version, but which are to be taken in a very wide or generic sense, the former as including all kinds of grain, and the latter as meaning 'orchard-fruit,' though in this fruit a prominent place may be given to the fruit of the olive, from which oil (*shemen*) was extracted. We find all the three terms denoting the produce of the field, of the vineyard, and of the orchard, occurring together nineteen times as descriptive of the abundance yielded by the good land which the Lord gave to Israel. . . (2) It is spoken of as a solid substance, gathered like *dōgan* and *yitzhar*, (Deut. xi. 14.) Like them, and also like animal food, it is spoken of as eaten, (Deut. xii. 17.) . . . (3) The law of the tithes, (Deut. xiv. 22-26,) seems to necessitate the interpretation of *tirosk* so as to include all the vineyard yielded; else a very large and valuable portion of the increase from agriculture would have escaped being tithed."

Dr. Lees also brings conclusive arguments to establish his position, that *tirosk* was not wine at all but the natural products of the vineyard. He translates the three terms composing the "beautiful triad of blessings—(1) corn-fruit, (2) vine-fruit, (3) orchard-fruit; or, in other words, the produce of the field, vineyard and orchard."

A further proof that the view of *tirosk* taken by Dr. Lees and Principal Douglas is essentially the correct one, is found in the prohibition in Num. vi. 3, 4, against the Nazarites drinking "wine and strong drink, . . . vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, . . . any liquor of grapes." And he was not to eat "fresh

grapes or dried; . . . nothing that is made of the grape vine, from the kernels even to the husk" (revised version). It is evident that Moses here enumerates all the specific products of the grape with which he was acquainted, designing to make his prohibition both as specific and complete as possible, and yet, on examining his terms, it is found that, while he uses *yayin* three times, and *shakar* twice, he makes no mention whatever of *tirosh*. We are forced, therefore, to the conclusion that, in Moses' time, *tirosh* could not have signified the unfermented juice of the grape, nor any other particular product of it, and so did not come within his enumeration of specific products, but was a comprehensive term for the whole produce of the vineyard.

For the translation of *tirosh*, therefore, I would suggest 葡萄園出產 *p'u-t'ao-yuan ch'u-ch'an*, the produce of the vineyard; and for the "triad of blessings," 各田與葡萄園並百菓園之出產 *ko t'ien yü p'u-t'ao-yuan ping pai kuo yü chih ch'u-ch'an*, the produce of the fields, vineyards and orchards. These phrases can be modified, or others with similar signification substituted, in different places, as the connection and style may require. In some cases, the term for grapes simply will do for *tirosh*, as in Micah vi. 15, where it says, they shall tread "*tirosh*, but shall not drink *yayin*."

Yayin occurs in the Bible one hundred and forty-one times, and in the authorized version, in nearly every case, is translated "wine." In the Delegates' Version in Chinese it is translated less uniformly, but the simple rendering *tsiu*, alcoholic liquor, much predominates over all others.

In respect to the meaning of *yayin*, Dr. Moore says: "For grape-juice, when it has undergone the vinous fermentation, the proper word is *yayin*." Principal Douglas says: "The general word for the produce of the vine, when this has been transformed into a liquid, is *yayin*, 'wine,' derived, according to the prevalent opinion, from a root meaning 'to be turbid, to boil up,' and applied to the grape-juice as it rushes foaming into the wine-vat." And further on he states: "It seems to be used to describe 'all sorts of wine,' (Neh. v. 18), from the simple grape-juice, or a thickened syrup, to the strongest liquors with which the Israelites were acquainted."

Space will only permit of a brief enumeration of the uses of *yayin* as given by Dr. Lees. "(a) It is used sometimes in the sense of the *vinum pendens* of the Latins. . . (b) *Yayin*, as used very frequently for the 'foaming blood of the grape,' was . . . probably applied to the expressed juice because of its turbid appearance. . . (c) In Prov. ix. 2, 5, *yayin* seems to point to a boiled wine, or syrup,

the thickness of which made it needful to mingle water with it before drinking. . . . (d) There was also the *yayin* mixed with drugs of various sorts: the 'mixed-wine' of the sensualist, spiced and inebriating; a cup of still stronger ingredients, used as the emblem of Divine judgments, the 'cup of malediction' (Ps. lxxv. 8). . . . (e) *Yayin* was also applied to every species of fermented grape-juice."

Thus it is seen that the view of Dr. Lees and Principal Douglas differs materially from that of Dr. Moore, but a careful examination of the subject seems to show that their view of the usage of *yayin* is the correct one, the term standing for both the unfermented and fermented juice of the grape in all the modes of its preservation and use.

Such being the case, it is evident that there is a difficulty in translating the term into Chinese. We have no word in the language that will stand for both unfermented and fermented drink. And, further, in some places *yayin* is so used that we cannot well decide whether, in the particular case, the reference is to the unfermented liquid or the other, or still may not be to both.

The best suggestion, therefore, that I am able to make is, that when *yayin* is spoken of with approbation, we translate by 葡萄汁 *p'u-t'ao-chih*, the juice of the grape, and that when it is referred to with disapprobation we translate by 葡萄酒 *p'u-t'ao-tsiu*, grape-alcoholic-liquor. And in the doubtful cases I would recommend the use of the former term, giving the natural and useful drink the benefit of the doubt.

As aids for guidance in classifying the varying usage of *yayin* and of the other terms, the *Temperance Bible Commentary*, by Dr. F. R. Lees and Rev. Dawson Burns, is of the greatest value. It not only gives lists of all the passages where the terms occur in the Bible, but also has comments on them. Also schedules of Bible texts where wine is referred to, with classification of the reference as in approbation or the opposite, are found in the London Edition of Dr. Nott's *Temperance Lectures*, in Delevan's *Consideration of the Temperance Argument and History*, and in *The Bible Testimony against Intoxicating Wine*, by Rev. William Ritchie. Of these, all but Nott's *Lectures* are published by the National Temperance Society of New York, and the *Commentary*, doubtless, is also published in England, so that these helps can be easily obtained.

Shakar occurs twenty-three times in the Bible, and in the authorized version is uniformly rendered "strong drink," except in Ps. lxix. 12, where we find "drunkards," with "drinkers of strong drink" in the margin, and in Num. xxviii. 7, it is "strong

wine." In the revised version, however, this "strong wine" is changed to "strong drink," probably for the sake of uniformity. In the Delegates' Version it is usually rendered 醇醪 *shun-lao*, rich alcoholic liquor.

As to the meaning of the Hebrew term, Dr. Moore calls this "artificial wine," as differing from *yayin*, the "natural" or grape-wine. He considers it to have always been fermented, and says: "It was prepared from grain, apples, honey or dates, and included *zuthos* or beer." Principal Douglas includes under this term, "pomegranate-wine, palm-wine, apple-wine, honey-wine, perhaps even beer, for some have identified it with the liquor obtained from barley by the Egyptians. But if any single beverage is to be selected as most commonly meant by *shakar*, it is the palm-wine, procured easily and abundantly by tapping the tree. When newly drawn off it is a delicious, wholesome, and refreshing drink; and it is so cheap as to form an important part of the sustenance of the people. But in one day's heat it undergoes a rapid fermentation, effervesces, and becomes of such intoxicating power as some of our light malt liquors." Dr. Lees defines *shakar* as "saccharine drink," and says it "is related to the word sugar in all the Indo-Germanic languages, and it is still applied throughout the East from India to Abyssinia to the palm-sap, the *zhaggery* made from it, to the date-juice and syrup, as well as to sugar and to the fermented palm-wine. It has, by usage, grown into a generic term for 'drinks,' including fresh juices and inebriating liquors, other than those coming from the grape."

On examining the usage of the term, the view taken by the last two authorities seems evidently to be the correct one. And if it be so, the mistranslation of the term, both into English and Chinese, is apparent. *Shakar* is no more properly rendered "strong drink" than *yayin* would be, unless it can be shown that it was more commonly mixed with potent drugs to increase its power of intoxication. It evidently stood for unfermented and sweet drinks as well as the fermented, and therefore there are the same difficulties in its translation that appear in the case of *yayin*.

To translate *shakar*, I would suggest the phrases 百菓汁 *pai-kuo-ch'ih*, hundred-fruits-juice, for the unfermented, and 百菓酒 *pai-kuo-tsiu*, hundred-fruits-alcoholic-liquor, for the fermented, with doubtful cases to follow the same rule as in the case of *yayin*. Perhaps the phrase 諸菓汁 *chu-kuo-ch'ih*, miscellaneous-fruit-juice, may be preferred to 百菓汁 *pai-kuo-ch'ih*, hundred-fruits-juice, etc., though the latter, at Foochow, would have a broader signification and could more naturally be interpreted to include drinks

prepared from grain, as well as the juices of various fruits, than the other term.

In treating of the translation of *oinos*, space requires brevity. In the Septuagint Greek and in the New Testament manuscripts, this term is used for the unfermented juice of the grape, for the same when fermented, and for vinegar.

According to the *Temperance Bible Commentary*, page 415, of the thirty-eight cases in which *tirosh* occurs in the Old Testament, it is translated in the Septuagint Version by *oinos* thirty-six times. Dr. Moore, as previously quoted, an advocate of the one-wine theory, claims that *tirosh* was "must," and that this is the traditional interpretation of the term. And if this be so, then, adopting his theory, we have here *oinos* used thirty-six times for the unfermented juice of the grape. But taking the better view of *tirosh* as signifying vintage-fruit, we have so many instances where *oinos* is used like *vinum pendens*, the hanging wine, for grapes. And that this is a legitimate use of the term is shown by Jer. xl. 10, 12, where Gedaliah commanded, and Jeremiah says the people "gathered (grapes) wine (*yayin*) and (other) summer fruits very much." In this place the Septuagint has *oinos* for *yayin* and the reference manifestly is to grapes. Compare also Micah vi. 15, where *tirosh*, translated in the Septuagint by *oinos*, plainly stands for grapes.

Again, on page 414, the *Commentary* says: "All the versions translate *yayin* by *oinos*" except in the nine cases which are there pointed out. Thus in the many cases where *yayin* stands for unfermented wine, *oinos* stands for the same.

And in the New Testament, the "new-wine" of Mat. ix. 17, was evidently unfermented. In *Schaff's Hertzog*, Article "Wine-making among the Hebrews," it is said: "When skins were used to hold new wine, 'must,' care had to be taken that the skin was also new, lest it should be burst asunder by the fermentation." Although it is not quite certain from this writer's phraseology whether or not he supposed the design was to preserve the new wine from fermenting at all,—as was manifestly the case, for no new skin-bottle ever could withstand the pressure generated by fermenting wine—still, it will be observed that he calls the new wine "must," thus understanding the new wine to be the unfermented juice of the grape.

And that the wine made by Christ at Cana, (Jno. ii. 1-11), was the sweet natural juice of the grape, such as the Creator makes annually through the vine, is also manifest. The miracle consisted in changing the water into such wine at once by the Savior's

almighty power, without the ordinary intervention of the vine, and it was in this act that he showed forth his Divine glory.

These two cases are sufficient to illustrate that *oinos*, in the New Testament, sometimes stands for unfermented wine.

That it also stands for fermented wine is admitted by all and needs no discussion.

It appears also to be used for vinegar in Mark xv. 23, as compared with Mat. xxvii. 34, and Psalm lxix. 21. Although the text in Matthew seems to have been at fault, and in the revised version the "vinegar" in Matthew is changed into "wine," thus making it correspond with Mark, still, in the *Textus Receptus* it is evident that the same thing is called both wine and vinegar; and now, if the "vinegar" of the revised version, still retained in Psalm lxix. 21, is the correct rendering, then the corrected text, as compared with the original prophesy in the Psalm, gives us *oinos* for vinegar in both Matthew and Mark.

Thus we see that *oinos* in the Scriptures stands for the juice of the grape in all stages and conditions of its use. And to translate it accurately into Chinese requires the same treatment as in the case of *yayin* in the Old Testament. We must therefore use the terms for grape-juice and grape-alcoholic-liquor as in the other case, and perhaps in the two passages already mentioned in Matthew and Mark translate *oinos* by the word for vinegar.

In conclusion, I will only say that if the above plan or something like it is not adopted in translating into Chinese the terms for wine in the Scriptures, there seems to be no way to render them at all faithfully, and the only apparent course left will be to transfer the Hebrew terms *tirosk*, *yayin* and *shakar* into our Chinese Bible, not attempting to translate them, and then use *yayin* for *oinos* also. Of course, we could then teach the Chinese the correct usage of the terms and convey to them the right sense.

And for this latter course there is good authority. The translators of the Septuagint Version transferred *shakar* in the Greek form of *sikera*, and Luke followed their example in the 15th of the 1st chapter of his Gospel. In the Vulgate also it is transferred in the Latin form of *sicera*.

At any rate, let us not go on misinterpreting and mistranslating God's pure and holy Word.

